



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



Bruce W. McClendon FAICP  
Director of Planning

October 4, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Bruce W. McClendon, FAICP  
Director of Planning

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**SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF THE STATE ACTION AGAINST SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY REGARDING ITS GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND THE COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND COMBAT GLOBAL WARMING**

On August 28, 2007, your Board adopted the sixth in a series of motions intended to ensure that the County of Los Angeles (the "County") is aware of and taking the necessary steps to address issues related to greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, and environmental protection. These motions include a study of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ("LEED") and Low Impact Development ("LID") Standards on January 16, 2007, a study on proposed incentives for employee purchased hybrids and increased public transit use on March 13, 2007, and investigation into banning plastic bags on April 10, 2007, a study on the impacts of banning Styrofoam on May 22, 2007, and the incorporation of energy efficiency as a criteria for prioritizing deferred maintenance on June 18, 2007. The August 28<sup>th</sup> motion was in response to the recent settlement between the California Attorney General and San Bernardino County ("San Bernardino") regarding San Bernardino's update to its General Plan. In that action, the Attorney General alleged that the General Plan update failed to address impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming in contravention of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). The Attorney General and San Bernardino entered into a settlement in which San Bernardino agreed to take a number of steps to address global warming related issues in an amendment to its recently adopted General Plan.

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In the motion by Supervisor Antonovich and the amended motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, included as Attachment A, your Board requested that the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"), in consultation with County Counsel and the Department of Regional Planning, assess the impact of the San Bernardino settlement on Los Angeles County. Your Board also requested that the Department of Regional Planning, the Department of Public Works ("Public Works"), and the Internal Services Department ("ISD") work with the CEO and County Counsel to provide a comprehensive update on the County's efforts to improve energy efficiency, combat global warming, and consider global warming related issues in the County's General Plan update.

As your Board is aware, the Attorney General has been taking steps, including sending a number of comment letters and filing the lawsuit against San Bernardino, to ensure that local jurisdictions adequately consider greenhouse gas emissions and global warming related issues in connection with general plan updates, as well as in connection with other land use activities such as the adoption of specific plans or the approval of large-scale individual projects. The San Bernardino settlement was an initial step in establishing some guidelines and parameters regarding the steps that the Attorney General believes municipalities and local governments should be taking to address greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. Although the San Bernardino settlement is specifically in response to that County's efforts to update its General Plan, it nevertheless provides guidance regarding what the Attorney General may expect Los Angeles County and other local governments to do in connection with their general plan updates and land use decisions.

Your Board requested that the CEO, in consultation with The Department of Regional Planning and County Counsel, assess the impact of the San Bernardino settlement on the County. In order to understand the potential impacts, it is important first to summarize the key provisions of the settlement. In the settlement, San Bernardino agreed to amend its General Plan within a specified time to add a policy outlining San Bernardino's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions reasonably attributable to San Bernardino's discretionary land use decisions and internal government operations. San Bernardino also agreed to adopt a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan, which would include a current inventory of emissions and sources, a projected inventory, a reduction target, and measures to reach that target. San Bernardino further agreed to adopt feasible mitigation measures to control diesel engine exhaust emissions on projects and facilities under the County's discretionary land use jurisdiction.

As noted above, the settlement provides some guidance regarding the steps that the Attorney General will expect municipalities and local governments to take in their land use planning efforts to address global warming issues and achieve greenhouse gas emissions reductions in keeping with the provisions of AB 32. San Bernardino did not

include any such analysis in its General Plan update prior to the Attorney General's lawsuit. The County, however, was already in the process of analyzing these issues in the General Plan update and developing policies to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and combat global warming prior to the settlement. Since the settlement, The Department of Regional Planning has further refined these efforts and developed a comprehensive approach by combining global warming related goals and policies throughout the Draft General Plan and arranging them into an Air Resources and Global Warming section which will become part of the draft General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element. This Air Resources and Global Warming section is included as Attachment B.

The County of Los Angeles is an innovative leader in the fight against global warming. The General Plan serves as a leading policy document for all of the departments in the County, and the Air Resources and Global Warming section provides a detailed overview of the County's current and proposed actions to address air quality, energy efficiency, and global warming. The development of the Air Resources and Global Warming section of the draft General Plan was guided by several important policy considerations, including taking steps to ensure that the County complied with the provisions of AB 32 and provided a satisfactory analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and global warming issues in light of the San Bernardino settlement.

The Air Resources and Global Warming section summarizes the existing conditions in the County related to air quality issues and global warming, and organizes in one place the many goals and policies in the General Plan that will directly improve air quality in the County, as well as lists the many programs the County has currently implemented and has proposed for implementation to combat global warming, improve energy efficiency, and improve environmental conditions countywide.

While many of the policies and programs in the General Plan update were designed to ensure that the County met its legal requirements, particularly in light of the San Bernardino settlement, the policies and programs were further designed to ensure the protection of the environmental health and safety of the residents of the County. In developing the policies and programs, The Department of Regional Planning conducted public meetings and outreach, which identified the region's continuing poor air quality ratings as a primary environmental concern for County residents. The Department of Regional Planning also took into consideration the increased awareness of land use and circulation policy and its effects on the environment, recognizing that a best practice policy the County can utilize to improve air quality is to organize its land uses and development patterns in ways that reduce our dependence on automobile use.

The two sources that organize and contain the majority of policy information and implementation measures to increase energy efficiency, improve air quality, and address global warming can be found in the Draft Los Angeles County General Plan and the County Code.

- The General Plan: The guiding theme of the County's 2007 General Plan update is to accommodate growth by promoting "green" development and smart growth planning principles that reduce and shorten vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled, conserve energy and water, protect natural resources, and create great places to live and work. The General Plan provides the framework for how the County will grow and develop over the next 20 years, and it positions Los Angeles County to be an innovative leader in "green" development and environmental stewardship. At the end of the General Plan's Air Resources and Global Warming section within the Conservation and Open Space Element all of the goals and policies related to improving air quality, combating global warming, and improving the conditions of the County's environment have been listed.
- County Code: There are several building and development standards in place within the County Code that address air quality, energy efficiency, and environmental conservation. The Code has several land use management strategies, such as transit-oriented development and clustered development that implement efficient land use policy that reduces environmental impacts and automobile use. Other standards that include open space requirements in new developments, the hillside management ordinance, minimum requirements for parking lot landscaping, and required tree canopies for new development. Further adaptations in the County Code to improve energy efficiency and lessen environmental impacts will be ongoing.

The programs and implementation measures outlined in the General Plan and implemented through the County Code and other endeavors are divided into four programs, which are detailed below:

1. Energy and Water Efficiency Program
2. Green Building/LIDS Program
3. Environmental Stewardship Program
4. Public Education and Outreach Program



### Energy and Water Efficiency Program

This program seeks to further reduce County facilities' energy and water consumption through the establishment of specific reduction targets. This program is discussed in the ISD's *Report in Support of the October 23, 2007 Presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Efforts to Improve Energy Efficiency and Combat Global Warming*, prepared as directed by your Board and included as Attachment C. Initiatives contained under the Energy and Water Efficiency Program include:

- ISD Energy Management Program: Ongoing ISD projects that have been implemented have resulted in over \$100 million in cumulative energy savings to the County. Most of these savings have been achieved through the retrofitting or replacement of building lighting systems and air conditioning equipment. On annual basis, these savings currently offset approximately 10% of the total ISD Utilities Budget, or the equivalency of 1,370 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> prevented from entering into the atmosphere, 12,000 cars taken off the road, or 20,000 acres of trees planted.
- ISD Facility Retrofitting Program: Initiated in 2004, this program "tunes up" County heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment. There are approximately 500 County buildings that are identified for the program and that will receive retrofitting upgrades. Other energy technologies that ISD is investigating to implement in this program where appropriate include: thermal storage, distributed generation, and widespread implementation of ISD's online, real-time energy monitoring tool (EEMIS).
- County Purchasing Policy (P-1050): Under P-1050, ISD's Purchasing Division will determine appropriate standards for green purchasing and will develop a 5-year plan to phase-in categories of certified goods. Easy to adopt purchasing categories, such as paper and cleaning supplies, will be implemented immediately. Central purchasing agreements with a catalog of environmentally friendly and energy efficient products will be established.
- Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMP): There are currently three IRWMPs in the planning process (Antelope Valley, Upper Santa Clara, and Greater Los Angeles County Region) within Los Angeles County. These plans develop strategies to secure a safe and reliable supply of water for the County. Within the plans are various project lists, of which many apply directly to the reduction of Greenhouse gases. Global warming is projected to worsen the intensity of droughts and increase drought occurrence. The implementation of these plans will address water efficiency, conservation, and recycling as well as the protection of ground and surface water and the development of new supplies.

- Recycled Water Task Force: In 2006, the BOS directed the Department of Public Works to convene a Task Force to make recommendations for the expanded use of recycled water for nonpotable purposes in the County. The County recognizes that increasing the use of recycled water would significantly lessen the County's dependency and the environmental impacts of imported water sources.

### **Green Building Program**

On January 16, 2007, the Board directed the creation of a green building program that would incorporate green building standards into all appropriate industrial, commercial, and residential development projects. The Board also directed the creation of a sustainable design program for County operations that includes practices to achieve LEED Silver Certification for new buildings greater than 10,000 square feet. In response to that motion, The Department of Regional Planning, ISD, and Public Works have taken a number of steps to develop green building initiatives to establish and implement the Green Building Program. These initiatives include:

- Energy and Environmental Policy Team: The Energy and Environmental Policy team is comprised of officials from the Department of Regional Planning, ISD, and the Department of Public Works, and works toward implementing the Green Building Program and Low Impact Development (LID) Standards outlined in the report below.
- Green Building Program and Low Impact Development (LID) Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County (Report): This initiative provides guidance to incorporate two major "green" programs in the County:
  - Green Building: The Department of Regional Planning prepared a report entitled *Green Building Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County*, which provides guidance on the implementation of LEED standards or similar requirements in the County's development standards for all appropriate industrial, commercial, and residential development. The report, which is included as Attachment D, includes recommended changes to building and zoning codes and establishes baseline standards for energy efficiency.
  - Low Impact Development (LID): Public Works prepared a related report entitled *Low Impact Development Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County*, which provides guidance on the implementation of LID practices in standards for new development and redevelopment projects in the County. The report, which is included as Attachment E, includes recommended changes to building and zoning codes and establishes standards for LID compliance.

- The Green Grant Program: Provides money to upgrade homes with energy saving tools, such as tankless water heaters, solar panels, insulation, and attic fans. The program is targeted to low-income homeowners in unincorporated County areas and is funded by Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

#### **Environmental Stewardship Program**

The program's purpose is to reduce the County's "environmental footprint" including the amount of greenhouse gases produced through direct and indirect County operations. Initiatives contained under the Environmental Stewardship Program include:

- California Climate Action Registry: The County has joined the Registry in order to utilize their reporting protocol for developing an assessment of the County's total greenhouse gases emissions responsibility.
- County "Clean Fuels" Policy: Since 1995, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) has directed all County departments to report on the composition of their fleet and their progress toward acquiring clean fuel vehicles.
- Departmental Recycling: The Energy and Environmental Policy team is working to enhance the County Departmental recycling Program which is led by the Public Works' Environmental Programs Division. This program placed a priority on implementing recycling bins in visible areas for the segregation of paper, plastic, glass and other recyclables from normal waste.
- Policies for Livable, Active Communities and Environments (PLACE) Program: The Department of Public Health's PLACE program addresses the influences of land use and community design on physical health. This program is open to cities, non-profits, school and for profit organizations that seek to promote changes to the built environment, such as streets, parks, and alternate modes of transportation, that promote physical activity in the everyday lives of County residents.

#### **Public Education and Outreach Program**

This program utilizes the County's communication and outreach channels to facilitate energy conservation practices and assistance programs. Initiatives contained under the Environmental Stewardship Program include:

- Rideshare: The County of Los Angeles Air Quality-Rideshare Program, mandated by County Ordinance 90-0033U, complies with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 2202 Employee Commute

Program and the federal Clean Air Act. Its mission is to promote ridesharing and telework as a workplace strategy that reduces traffic congestion, air pollution and commuter costs. The Chief Executive Office sets program policy and coordinates implementation of uniform procedures, through a Countywide Coordinator Network. The County Labor-Management Advisory Committee has oversight responsibility for Civic Center Rideshare strategies and achievement of regional air quality/rideshare goals.

- Environmental Fairs: Coordinated by the Energy and Environmental Policy Team, there will be a series of energy and environmental fairs which will provide County employees and the public with opportunities to learn about energy efficient and sustainable products and practices for home and work.
- Regional Outreach: The Energy and Environmental Policy team conducts workshops on doing "green" business with the County. The first workshop was held in March 2007 in El Segundo with the Office of Small Business.
- Local Government Collaboration: The County, through ISD, has joined the Local Government Commission's Local Government Sustainable Energy Coalition (LGSEC). The LGSEC is an association of local governments who have committed to tracking and participating in energy activities jointly in order to conserve expenses and speak with a stronger, unified voice.

It will truly be a countywide effort to combat the serious impacts of our growth on the environment and on climate change. The Department of Regional Planning has been a leader in coordinating a collaborative outreach effort to incorporate all County departments in the effort to address the requirements of AB 32, and also to improve the environmental practices and procedures of our land use development and building practices.

AB 32 requires significant attention to the creation of land use and building practices that will have far reaching effects on air quality, energy consumption, and global warming. Because of the multi-faceted implementation of the programs and practices countywide, as well as the fact that such implementation will require the combined effort of many different County departments, it is important that the County's efforts to combat global warming be appropriately coordinated to fulfill the AB 32 state mandates and the County's goals. With the full support of the Board of Supervisors, the Chief Executive Officer, the Department of Public Works, and the Internal Services Department, and with the necessary authority to obtain compliance from the affected Departments, the Department of Regional Planning would be willing to assume this coordinating responsibility.



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If you have any questions, please contact me or Paul McCarthy by phone at (213) 974-6461 or by email at [pmccarthy@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:pmccarthy@planning.lacounty.gov).

BWM:PM

C: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Clerk of the Board

- Attachment A: August 28, 2007 Board of Supervisors motion to assess the impact of the San Bernardino settlement on Los Angeles County
- Attachment B: Los Angeles County Draft General Plan, Air Resources section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.
- Attachment C: *Report in Support of the October 23, 2007 Presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Efforts to Improve Energy Efficiency and Combat Global Warming Green Building Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County*
- Attachment D: *Green Building Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County*
- Attachment E: *Low Impact Development Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County*